

AMNENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A method for selling gift certificates and/or store credits to one or more bidders on the Internet, comprising:

receiving individual gift certificates and/or store credits from two or more distinct unrelated sellers, each gift certificate and/or store credit independently having an undesirable value associated with each one independently;

combining gift certificates and/or store credits from ~~the~~ two or more distinct *unrelated* sellers as a single item for auction, ~~each gift certificate and/or store credit independently having an undesirable value associated with each one independently,~~ wherein each of the gift certificates and/or store credits when combined represent a desirable combined value thereby rendering the combined value more usable at a single retail entity;

receiving, from or more bidders, at least one bid for the single item; and selling the single item to a winning bidder, wherein the winning bidder receives the combined gift certificates and/or store credits.

2. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the two or more sellers' gift certificates and/or store credits are combined to approximate a certain predetermined value threshold.

3. (previously amended) The method of claim 1, wherein a value limit is set for winning bid for the single item, wherein the limit does not exceed the face value of each of the plurality of gift certificates and store credits and bids in excess of the predetermined value limit will be automatically reduced to the value limit.

4. (previously amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the sellers will split the proceeds of the sale of the single item according to the respective percentages their respective gift certificate and/or store credit contributed to the total value of the single item.

5. (previously amended) The method of claim 1 further comprising:

providing proceeds from the sale of the one or more gift certificates and/or store credits to the one or more sellers, wherein the proceeds is the sale price of the one or more gift certificates and/or store credits minus a commission.

6. (previously amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
receiving a payment from the winning bidder via a credit card.

7. (previously amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the predetermined value limit is at a maximum equal to 99.99% of the face value of the gift certificate and/or store credit.

8. (previously amended) A system for selling gift certificates and/or store credits, comprising:
means for combining gift certificates and/or store credits from two or more sellers;
means for receiving bids for the combined gift certificates and/or store credits; and
means for selling the combined gift certificates and/or store credits to one or more bidders.

9. (previously amended) The system of claim 8, wherein each of the two or more sellers will split the proceeds of the sale of the single item according to the respective percentages each contributed to the single item.

10. (previously amended) The system of claim 8, wherein the predetermined value limit is at a maximum equal to 99.99% of the face value of the gift certificate and/or store credit.

11. (previously amended) The system of claim 8, wherein the gift certificates and/or store credits are combined to approximate a predetermined whole dollar value.

12. (previously amended) The system of claim 8, further comprising:

means for deducting a commission from a selling price of the one or more gift certificates and/or store credits.

13. (previously amended) The system of claim 8, further comprising:
means for verifying the authenticity of the one or more gift certificates and/or store credits.

14. (currently amended) A method for auctioning a plurality of seller's gifts certificates and/or store credits to one or more bidders in an Internet auction, comprising:
receiving individual gift certificates and/or store credits which have no practical individual value;

combining the seller's gift certificates and/or store credits as a single item for auction, ~~wherein each distinct gift certificate and/or store credit is undesirable when alone since each distinct gift certificate and/or store credit represent an undesirable amount alone but~~ when combined **the combination** represents a desirable amount for a bidder;
receiving bids for combined gift certificates and/or store credit; and
selling the ~~one or more~~ gift certificates and/or store credits to a winning bidder.

15. (previously amended) The method of claim 14, further comprising:
receiving a payment from the winning bidder via a credit card.

16. (previously amended) The method of claim 14, further comprising:
deducting a commission from a selling price of the one or more gift certificates and/or store credits.

17. (previously amended) The method of claim 14, wherein the limit is in the range of about 90% to 99% of the face value of the gift certificate and/or store credit.

18. (previously amended) The method of claim 14, wherein two or more sellers can combine gift certificates and/or store credits from a common entity and sell the combined gift certificates and/or store credits as a single item.

19. (previously amended) The method of claim 14, further comprising:
validating the seller's gift certificates and/or store credits to verify that the gift certificate
and/or store credit is valid.

20. (previously amended) The method of claim 14, wherein the step of combining the
seller's gift certificates and/or store credits as a single item for auction includes the step
of:

approximating a predetermined whole dollar value with the combined seller's gift
certificates and/or store credits.

21. (currently amended) An apparatus for facilitating a transaction between a buyer
and at least one of a plurality of sellers, comprising:

a storage device; and a processor connected to the storage device,
the storage device storing a program for controlling the processor; and
the processor operative with the program to
receive individual ~~a plurality of~~ gift certificates and/or store credits from two or
more independent sellers for auction;
combine **each of the individual** sellers' gift certificates and/or store credits as a
single item for auction since each of the gift certificates and/or store credits individually
~~do~~ does not have a desirable value independently;
receive bids for the combined gift certificates and/or store credits;
receive payment for the combined gift certificates and/or store credits; and
provide payment to each of the sellers of the combined gift certificates and/or
store credits.